

Chris,

Stamford Representative Andy Sklover wrote me on this morning's public hearing on technical high schools. As a fellow representative of Stamford's 16th district, I ask you please include my testimony on J. M. Wright Technical High School as follows...

I was very fortunate to have grown up in a family of successful, hardworking tradesmen and had the privilege of meeting many mechanics in various vocations. The common thread most if not all shared was having graduated Wright Tech. The years these businessmen were in attendance at Wright Tech and many years thereafter were fraught with incoming enrollment lists. The diminishing rolls that pursued can only be attributed to the unfortunate stereotype that was allowed to develop regarding students who attended J. M. Wright Technical High School.

There was a time, mine included, when Stamford Public Middle Schools required students to attend industrial arts classes. Although middle school was only a two year stay then, students had two years of woodworking, print shop and metalworking which included mechanical drawing. Today those classes are gone. Why?... Because we made way for the unrelenting pursuit of every student attending college. No doubt an admirable goal in its intent but what resulted was an impressionable typecast left on students who wanted to attend Wright Tech. They became the group who just couldn't cut the mustard.

I know no one will accept fault for this disservice we paid to our children over the years. Nevertheless, it is my personal and heartfelt testimony to what is now the demise of J. M. Wright Technical High School. You will get the argument Stamford's comprehensive high schools also offer shop classes which can prepare a student for the trades. The debate is weak at best. There is no comparison with the curriculum Wright Tech ascribes to where students have alternating weeks of academia and elected trade theory and practice with graduation allowing an apprenticeship status.

A good friend once said "We need computer science professionals but, we also need someone to build the table the computer sits on." The Connecticut State Department of Education must provide guidelines to middle schools giving students a well unbiased choice on moving to a technical high school or high school. While they're at it, they can begin the budget process for restoring industrial arts in middle schools.

Sincerely,

Michael L. Molgano